

Message Text

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON CULTURE MINISTER DEMICHEV

1. SUMMARY. IN COURTESY CALL BY AMBASSADOR, NEW MINISTER OF CULTURE P.N. DEMICHEV CONFIRMS UPCOMING PLENUM WILL RELIEVE HIM OF PREVIOUS JOB AS CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY, PREDICTS NO CHANGE IN CULTURAL POLICY, SUGGESTS BILATERAL ACTIVITIES IN FIELD OF YOUTH GUIDANCE AS ONE OF POSSIBILITIES OPENED UP BY VLADIVOSTOK.
END SUMMARY

2. I PAID COURTESY CALL ON NEW MINISTER OF CULTURE PETR NILOVICH DEMICHEV DECEMBER 9, AT MY REQUEST. AS FAR AS I KNOW I WAS FIRST FOREIGN AMBASSADOR TO BE RECEIVED ALTHOUGH OTHERS HAVE REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS. ALSO PRESENT WERE DEPUTY MINISTER V.O. POPOV, EXTERNAL RELATIONS CHIEF A.M. DYUZHEV, AND AMERICAN DESK OFFICER A.. SHERSHUKOV, AND FOR AMERICAN SIDE P&C COUNSELOR NALLE.

3. MY IMPRESSION OF DEMICHEV, WHO IS TRIM, WELL-PRESERVED MAN OF MIDDLE STATURE, WAS OF FORCEFUL PERSONALITY, A BIT HUMORLESS, BUT PLEASANT, SOFT-SPOKEN, AND ALMOST PROFESSORIAL IN MANNER. IN CONVERSATION HE GAVE EVIDENCE OF HAVING THOROUGH GRASP OF CULTURAL MATTERS, PARTICULARLY PAINTING AND MUSIC, AS WELL AS GOOD BACKGROUND IN TECHNICAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS.

4. AFTER EXCHANGE ON ENDURING AND CONSTRUCTIVE NATURE OF
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BILATERAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM, I REMARKED MINISTER MUST

BE FULLY OCCUPIED BY HIS TOW POSITIONS, AS CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY AND NOW MINISTER. HE RESPONDED DIRECTLY THAT HE WAS BUSY BUT THAT THERE WOULD SHORTLY BE A PARTY PLENUM WHICH WOULD RELIEVE HIM OF FORMER RESPONSIBILITY.

5. TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HIS ACCESSION PRESAGED CHANGES IN CULTURAL POLICY, HE RESPONDED RATHER PRIMLY THAT POLICY WAS NOT PERSONAL BUT PERMANENT, THEN FOLLOWED WITH WARM EXPRESSION OF HIS RESOLVE TO GIVE GREAT ATTENTION TO EXPANSION OF "MEANS OF CULTURAL EXPRESSION" TO BROADEST MASS OF PEOPLE WHO NOW HAD TWO FREE DAYS A WEEK AND PROSPECT OF EVEN MORE LEISURE. IN AN ECHOING PHRASE, HE REMINDED ME MEN DO NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, AND SAID PARTICULAR ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD BE GIVEN TO AMATEUR ARTS, WITH EMPHASIS NOT ON CULTURAL BUILDINGS, FOR WHIHC THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN AN ACTIVE PROGRAM, BUT ON THE INCREASE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL CADRES. SOCIALIST REALISM, HE SAID, WOULD BE GUIDING POLICY, REALISTIC ARTISTIC EXPRESSION WHICH SERVED COMMUNISM, HTE SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE FULFILLMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

6. I ASKED WHETHER THIS POLICY WOULD, IN PAINTING, FOR EXAMPLE, EXCLUDE ABSTRACT ART AND WAS TREATED TO A STANDARD BUT PATIENT AND ARTICULATE EXPOSITION OF THE PHILOPHY OF SOCIALIST REALISM: IT MADE NO PRESCRIPTION, THE MINISTER SAID, ABOUT FORM, STYLE OR CONTENT, ONLY INSISTING THAT ART SHOULD NOT BE ANTI-COMMUNIST AND THAT IT SHOULD NOT PROPAGANDIZE WAR AND VIOLENCE BUT RATHER BE HUMANISTIC IN CONTENT, IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

7. A DIGRESSION ON PICASSO, WHOSE GENIUS AND WORK, IN PART, MINISTER COULD ACCEPT, LED TO HIS INTERESTING OBSERVATION THAT WHILE IT WAS CUSTOMARY AND RELATIVELY EASY TO MAKE PREDICTIONS OF THE STATE IN ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SUCH FINITE THINGS AS TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY RESOURCES, AND COMPUTER APPLICA- TIONS IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE TO DO THIS WITH REGARD TO CULTURE. HIS CHOICE OF OPERA AS EXAMPLE OF HOW VALID ART FORMS WOULD ENDURE AND PROSPER DESPITE INCURSIONS OF NEW FORMS SUCH AS TELEVISION LED HIM TO REMARK THAT HIS WIFE AND DUAGHTER WERE "SINGERS," AS HIS MOTHER HAD ALSO BEEN. IT ALSO LED TO REVELA- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TION THAT THERE WAS A DISPUTE WITHIN MINISTRY OVER (SOCIALIST) ARTISTIC INTEGRITY OF PROKOFIEV'S RECENTLY RECREATED OPERA "THE GAMBLER" (IGROK), WITH MINISTER SUPPORTING THE NEGAIVE.

8. REVERTING TO THE NEED TO SPREAD CULTURE, DEMICHEV EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN FOR SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH, A MUTUAL CONCERN, HE SUGGESTED, WHICH MIGHT WELL BE SUBJECT OF BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS OR EVEN PUBLICATIONS ALONG LINES NOW

BEING DISCUSSED, HE SAID, WITH FRENCH. POPOV INTERJECTED REMARKS IN THIS CONNECTION ABOUT SUCCESS OF PAST VISITS U.S. UNIVERSITY CHORAL GROUPS, AT WHICH ALL NODDED ASSENT.

9. DEMICHEV BROUGHT UP VLADIVOSTOK SUMMIT SAYING IT OPENED UP MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION AND FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE, BUT ALSO FOR SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF MUTUAL PROBLEMS. HE ASKED ME ABOUT INFLATION IN U.S., LISTENED POLITELY TO MY CHARACTERIZATION OF IT AS A SITUATION WHICH WE WOULD IN TIME CONTROL AND WAS NON COMMITAL ON MY IDENTIFICATION OF OIL PRICING AS ONE CAUSE. HE DWELT AT SOME LENGTH AND WITH APPARENT CONCERN AND KNOWLEDGE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE QUESTIONS, CONCLUDING AND REITERATING THAT SUCH PROBLEMS REQUIRED PLANNING AND GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION/CONTROL, FEATURES OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM WE WOULD DO WELL TO EMULATE, JUST AS SOVIETS HAD, ON LENIN'S ADVICE, CAREFULLY STUDIED AND ADOPTED FROM US OUR TECHNIQUEST OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTIVITY.

10. OUR BUSINESSLIKE, SERIOUS, BUT CORDIAL MEETING ENDED ON THIS NOTE AT THE ONE HOUR MARK.

11. COMMENT: DEMICHEV LOOKS LIKE AND IS REPUTED BY VARIOUS EMBASSY CONTACTS TO BE REASONABLE MAN, ALBEIT A THOROUGH AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGUE. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH P&C COUNSELOR THIS WEEK, LEADING SOVIET POET CHARACTERIZED DEMICHEV AS "NOT EXACTLY A LIBERAL BUT NOT BLOOD-THIRSTY" AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT DEMICHEV WOULD STAY ON AS CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY, AS A RELATIVELY BENIGN INFLUENCE IN THAT POSITION WHICH IS KEY TO CLIMATE OF CREATIVE WORLD HERE. WE SEE, THEREFORE, NO GREAT CHANGE AT MINCULT EXCEPT, IN ABSENCE OF FURTSEVA'S ERRATIC CHARM, TOWARD A MORE CONSISTENT AND CAREFUL APPLICATION OF CULTURAL POLICY, ESPECIALLY IN FIELDS OF ART, DANCE AND MUSIC WHICH ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTRY. ALONG WITH SOVIET COMMUNITY WE AWAIT WITH INTEREST NAMING OF NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY, WHOSE NATURE AND PREDILECTIONS WILL HAVE SPECIAL IMPACT ON ENTIRE ARTS COMMUNITY BUT ESPECIALLY WRITERS, WHOSE UNION AND ACTIVITIES FALL MORE CLOSELY UNDER SURVEILLANCE OF THIS POSITION. CANDIDATES MENTIONED IN MOSCOW RUMORS INCLUDE KOMSOMOL CHIEF YE.M. TYAZHELMIKOV, PRAVDA EDITOR M.V. ZIMYANIN, LENINGRAD OBLAST PARTY SECRETARY G.V. ROMANOV, AND TASS GENERAL DIRECTOR L.M. ZAMYATIN. TYAZHELMNIKOV HAD BEEN MENTIONED IN PREVIOUS RUMORS AS FURTSEVA'S REPLACEMENT IN MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND MIGHT PROVE MOST SYMPATHETIC FIGURE FROM OUR STANDPOINT OF THE RUMORED CANDIDATES. STOESEL

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